

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A tile for seamless paving structures, said tile comprising:
a plurality of ~~irregularly shaped~~ stone elements bonded to and extending at least partially above a backing layer or base, said tile characterized in that said stone elements are of differing shape and size and are randomly arranged on said backing layer or base such that when in aligned abutting relationship with an adjacent tile tiles, forming together with said adjacent tile tiles together form an irregularly shaped cavity cavities of differing shape and size extending between adjacent stone elements of adjacent tiles whereby, in use, a grouted joint between adjacent tiles extends irregularly on each side of a joint between said respective backing layer layers or base bases to form ~~an~~ a non-linear optically seamless joint between adjacent tiles.
2. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein respective edges of outer said stone elements ~~extend up to~~ lie within edges of said backing layer or base.
3. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein respective edges of said backing layer or base extend beyond outer edges of adjacent stone elements bonded thereto.
4. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein said backing layer or base is ~~selected from~~ of any suitable shape including rectangular, regular polygon or an irregular shape nestable with adjacent tiles of the same or differing shapes.
5. (Original) A tile as claimed in claim 1 comprising a rectangular backing layer or base having one or more spigot-like projections extending from opposite or adjacent edges and corresponding socket-like recesses or respective opposite or adjacent edges.
6. (Original) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein said backing layer or base comprises a rigid material to which said stone elements are secured.
7. (Original) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein said backing layer or base comprises a flexible material to which said stone elements are secured.

8. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim ~~4~~ 6 wherein said backing layer or base comprises a ~~ementitious~~ cementitious composition with or without a polymeric bonding agent.

9. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim ~~4~~ 7 wherein said backing layer or base comprises a polymeric composition.

10. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim ~~4~~ 22 wherein said backing layer or base comprises a plastics mesh.

11. (Currently amended) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~said tile is formed whereby~~ normally exposed upper surfaces of stone elements comprising said tile lie in a substantially common plane.

12. (Withdrawn) A method for manufacture of tiles for seamless paving structures said method comprising the steps of:

supporting on a substantially planar support surface, a plurality of irregularly shaped stone elements with a normally exposed surface of said stone elements being in contact with said support surface; and,

securing to respective opposite surfaces of said stone elements a backing layer or base having a mounting surface substantially parallel to said support surface, said method characterized in that said irregularly shaped stone elements of each said tile are positioned relative to each other whereby non-linear tile boundaries are formed such that, in use, a grouted joint between adjacent tiles extends irregularly on each side of a joint between respective backing layers or bases to form an optically seamless joint.

13 (Withdrawn) A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said mounting surface is positioned at a predetermined distance from said support surface to form a tile of predetermined thickness.

14. (Withdrawn) A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said stone elements are secured to a mesh substrate.

15. (Withdrawn) A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said backing layer or base is formed by a flowable castable material adhesively securable to said stone elements.

16. (Withdrawn) A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said backing layer or base is formed in a mould having an upright boundary wall.

17. (Withdrawn) A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein a flowable displacement material is introduced into interstices between adjacent stone elements before formation of a backing layer or base thereover to form grout channels therebetween.

18. (Previously presented) A method for installing tiles for seamless paving structures, said method including the steps of:

adhering to a planar surface in aligned abutment adjacent tiles according to claim 1; and,

introducing a grouting composition into cavities between adjacent stone elements whereby said grouting composition in the region of a joint between adjacent tiles extends irregularly over each side of said joint to form a substantially optically seamless joint.

19. (Currently amended) A method of installing tiles according to claim ~~26~~ 18 wherein said tiles are laid on said surface with abutting base edges.

20. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 18 wherein said base edges are spaced and stone elements of differing sizes are inserted into the surface of grout therebetween to form an optically seamless joint.

21. (New) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein said backing layer or base comprises reinforcing material.

22. (New) A tile as claimed in claim 1 wherein said backing layer or base comprises an apertured sheet like material.

23. (New) A tile as claimed in claim 21 wherein the reinforcing material is selected from chopped fibres with or without enlarged ends, matting or a metal or plastics mesh.

24. (New) A tile as claimed in claim 11 wherein said tile is formed with a substantially constant thickness whereby normally exposed surfaces of stone elements of adjacent tile lie in a substantially common plane.